

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANA 02714 251205Z

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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TAGS: PFOR, UN, OTRA, YE, US

SUBJECT: YARG FONMIN ASNAJ MEETING WITH SECRETARY

REF: SANA 2713

1. SHOULD A MEETING BETWEEN YARG FONMIN ASNAJ AND SECRETARY BE SCHEDULED, AS PROPOSED REFTEL, THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL IN PREPARING TALKER.

2. BACKGROUND: THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC HAS METAMORPHOSED, IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, INTO A SAUDI CLIENT AFTER YEARS WHEN FOREIGN INFLUENCES AND RADICAL TENDENCIES IN YEMEN MADE IT A THREAT TO PENINSULA SECURITY AND A TERRITORIAL AND POLITICAL THREAT TO SAUDI ARABIA. DESPITE THEIR ACKNOWLEDGED DEPENDENCE ON SAUDI ARABIA, YEMENIS RETAIN A HIGHLY INDEPENDENT AND NATIONALISTIC STREAK, AND BELIEVE FOR INSTANCE THAT THEIR LARGE LABOR FORCE--PERHAPS HALF OF SAUDI ARABIA'S--IS AS IMPORTANT TO SAUDI DEVELOPMENT AS SAUDI MONEY IS TO YEMENI DEVELOPMENT. COMMUNIST STATE PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE IS DWINDLING, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR A DEPARTURE IN THE NEAR FUTURE OF THE RESIDUAL BUT STILL LARGE (114 MAN) SOVIET MILITARY TRAINING MISSION IS GOOD. AFTER YEARS OF TRIBAL CONFLICT, THE COUNTRY IS NOW SECURE AND THE GOVERNMENT IS STRONGLY LED BY A YOUNG, SHREWD, MODERATE ARMY OFFICER NAMED IBRAHIM AL-HAMDI. THE PRESENT YEMENI GOVERNMENT LOOKS TO AN ACTIVE ROLE BY US AND THE SAUDIS TO EASE THE THREAT POSED BY THE RADICAL PDRY, WHICH DRAWS SUPPORT FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES--LIBYA, THE USSR, PRC,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SANA 02714 251205Z

AND EXTREMIST FEDAYEEN GROUPS. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO IS CONCERNED

BY OTHER LEFTIST FORCES IN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA,
(TOGETHER WITH ITS EMBATTLED ETRITREAN PROVINCE).
THE US ROLE IN YEMEN HAS FACILITATED AND SPEEDED THE REORIENTATION
OF YEMEN TOWARD THE WEST AND SAUDI ARABIA, PROVIDING
BOTH ECONOMIC AID AND NOW, SOON TO BEGIN, AN ARMS SALES
PROGRAM. WE HAVE ALSO REPEATEDLY URGED FLEXIBILITY AND GENEROSITY
ON THE SAUDIS, WHO HAVE OVER TIME SHIFTED THEIR SUPPORT FROM
THE TRIBES AND CERTAIN TRADITIONAL FIGURES TO THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT WITH ITS MODERNIZING AND NATIONALISTIC IMPETUS.
THE SAUDIS, AS A RESULT ARE NOW THE DOMINANT POLITICAL POWER
IN YEMEN. THEY ARE CLEARLY USING THEIR SUCCESS IN YEMEN
AS A STALKING HORSE FOR SIMILAR CHANGES IN PDRY. WE HAVE A
STRONG NATITNAL INTEREST IN SUPPORTING THIS SAUDI EFFORT IN
THELTWO YEMENS AND, WHEREEVER POSSIBLE, SUPPLEMENTING IT.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER ASNAJ: FONMIN ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ WAS BORN
IN ADEN, THE SON OF A WELL-KNOWN NORTY YEMEN JUDGE OF ISLAMIC
LAW. DESPITE HIS MARRIAGE INTO A WEALTHY ADENI FAMILY,
HE MADE HIS POLITICAL CAREER DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD
IN THE VERY ACTIVE AND POWERFUL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.
IN REACTION TO THE BRITISH EFFORT TO BUILD A POST
INDEPENDENCE GOVERNMENT ON TRADITIONAL TRIABL RULERS,
HE WENT INTO EXILE IN NORTH YEMEN AND INTO THE EGYPTIAN-
FINANCED FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH YEMEN. THIS
GROUP LOST OUT IN THE POST INDEPENDENCE ANARCHY WHEN THE
EGYPTIANS DEFEATED IN SINAI IN 1967, WITHDREW FROM THEIR
SOUTH ARABIAN ADVENTURE IN THE TWO YEMENS, AND THE BRITISH
THREW THEIR SUPPORT TO THE ANTI-NASSERIST NATIONAL LIBERATION
FRONT WHICH STILL RULES ADEN. ASNAJ HAS SINCE THEN THROWN
IN HIS LOT WITH THE NORTH YEMENI GOVERNMENT. HE IS NOW
PRESIDENT HAMDI'S CHIEF MENTOR AND A DECISIVE FIGURE IN THE
YARG GOVERNMENT. HE IS A REFLECTIVE BUT TOUGH POLITICIAN
A DISILLUSIONED RADICAL WHO HAS RETURNED TO MIDDLE CLASS
MODERATION AND WESTERN ORIENTATION. HE IS BLUNT AND COMPLETELY
HONEST
IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN SANA. HE
RETAINS A DEEP AND SHREWD INTEREST IN CHANGES IN PDRY.

4. ITEMS EMBASSY BELIEVES SHOULD BE DISCUSSED:
FIVE ITEMS MERIT DISCUSSION WITH AL-ASNAJ INCLUDING A) OUR SUPPORT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SANA 02714 251205Z

FOR CURRENT MODERATION AND STABILITY EMANATING FROM SANA
B) QUESTION OF POSSIBLE US ARMS SALES TO YAR;
C) DEVELOPMENTS IN SAG-YARG RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AID;
D) EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN SOUTH YEMEN (PDRY); AND
E) YARG SUPPORT FOR US ON CERTAIN UN QUESTION AND IN PARTICULAR
KOREA.

A. OUR SUPPORT FOR YAR: SECRETARY MAY WISH

INTRODUCE REMARKS BY REAFFIRMING US SUPPORT FOR YARG'S MODERATE AND PRAGMATIC POLICIES OVER PAST SIXTEEN MONTHS AND OUR SATISFACTION WITH PRESIDENT HAMD'S CONSOLIDATION OF POWER AFTER A PERIOD OF INDECISIVE COLLEGIAL LEADERSHIP. WE INTEND TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO STRENGTHEN THE STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF YEMEN AS A STATE OF MODERATION IN OTHERWISE RADICAL AREA.

B. ARMS SALES: ASNAJ SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT US LINKS MODERNIZATION AND UPGRADING OF YEMEN ARMED FORCES TO OVERALL SECURITY OF ARABIAN PENINSULA. WE ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST IN THIS EFFORT TO FOLLOWING EXTENT:

--THE SAUDIS HAVE CONDUCTED A DETAILED STUDY OF THE YAR'S MILITARY REQUIREMENTS. OUR OWN 1974 DOD ANALYSIS IN IN BROAD SUPPORT OF THE SAUDI CONCLUSIONS.

--ONCE MILITARY AID PACKAGE AGREED UPON BY SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN, US PREPARED TO RESPOND IMMEDIATELY TO EXTENT POSSIBLE IN PROVIDING QUICK DELIVERY OF SMALL "IMPACT PACKAGE". WE ARE THEN PREPARED TO CONSIDER OTHER SALES AND TRAINING OVER A LONGER TERM.

--US DOES NOT RPT NOT INSIST ON BECOMING THE EXCLUSIVE ARMS SUPPLIER TO YAR. WE ARE INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH OTHER INTERESTED AND FRIENDLY STATES, AND IN PARTICULAR SAUDI ARABIA TO PRVIDE NECESSARY DEFENSE SUPPORT FOR YAR.

C. SAG-YARG RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AID: THE SECRETARY WILL WANT TO STRESS BROAD SATISFACTION AT GROWING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN, AND ALSO SAY THAT --WE ARE PREPARED AS IN THE PAST TO RAISE WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS ISSUES OF CONCERN TO YARG.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 SANA 02714 251205Z

--WE LOOK TO THE SAUDIS TO PROVIDE MAJOR CAPITAL ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN, BUT THE USG WILL CONTINUE GRADUALLY TO EXPAND A BILATERAL AID PROGRAM IN AREAS WHERE WE CAN MAKE A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION--AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

D. TRENDS IN SOUTH YEMEN (PDRY): AS ASNAJ IS ONE OF FOREMOST OBSERVERS OF PDRY AFFAIRS, THE SECRETARY MAY WISH TO OBTAIN HIS VIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN SOUTH YEMEN. SECRETARY MAY WISH TO STRESS STRONG US INTEREST IN ALTERING CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATIONS OF PDRY REGIME RELATING TO A) ITS OVERT SUPPORT FOR DHOFAR INSURRECTION; B) ITS CONTINUED DIRECTION OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN NORTH YEMEN; AND C) THE HEGEMONY OF COMMUNIST STATES IN THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS OF SOUTH YEMEN.

ASNAJ SHOULD BE ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS ON THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS OF MODERATE ARAB (PARTICULARLY SAUDI AND EGYPTIAN) APPROACHES TO PDRY.

--WHAT INDUCEMENTS ARE NECESSARY?

--HOW REAL WILL BE THE POLITICAL CONCESSIONS OFFERED BY PDRY?

--IF THESE APPROACHES DO NOT MAKE SIGNIFICANT HEADWAY, WHAT POLICIES DOES ASNAJ SEE AS VIABLE ALTERNATIVES?

--DOES ASNAJ FORESEE MORE ACTIVE ROLE FOR YARG IN ENCOURAGING MODERATION OF PDRY POLICIES?

E. YARG SUPPORT ON UN RESOLUTIONS. OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO US THIS SESSION IS KOREAN QUESTION. ASNAJ HAS ALREADY INSTRUCTED YAR UN DELEGATION TO WITHDRAW CO-SPONSORSHIP OF HOSTILE RESOLUTION AND YARG PLANNING ABSTAIN ON ACTUAL VOTE. THIS IS MAJOR POLITICAL SHIFT FROM THE PAST, TAKEN DESPITE CONTINUING PRC AND NORTH KOREAN AID TO YAR, AND ABSENCE OF ROK EMBASSY IN SANA. NEVERTHELESS, SECRETARY SHOULD--REITERATE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE TO US ACD--ASK ASNAJ TO MOVE TO SUPPORT FRIENDLY RESOLUTION THIS YOTTORATHER THAN PUT OFF DECISION ON THIS ISSUE UNTIL NEXT YEAR.

5. ITEMS WHICH ASNAJ WILL WANT TO DISCUSS: ALTHOUGH ASNJA WILL WELCOME AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT ISSUES HE WILL PROBABLY CONCENTRATE ON ISSUES OF BILATERAL INTERDST. THESE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 SANA 02714 251205Z

WILL FOCUS ON MATTER OF US ECONOMIC AID AND MILITARY ARMS SALES (PARA 4B). HE MAY ALSO WISH TO DISCUSS SOUTH YEMEN (PARA 4D) FROM VIEW POINT OF WHAT INITIATIVES US PLANS TO TAKE TOWARDS PDRY, IF ANY.
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